

Review of relief norms under CRF/NCCF

804. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government have constituted an Expert Group to review the relief norms of the CRF/NCCF;
- (b) whether any decision has been taken by Government on the report of the Expert Group;
- (c) what representations have been made by Gujarat and other States to revise the norms fixed under CRF/NCCF; and
- (d) what decision has been taken by Government on these representations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (d) An Expert Group has been set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs to comprehensively review the existing items and norms of expenditure for assistance from CRF/NCCF and formulate the norms for newly added calamities in the approved list of natural calamities. The Expert Group, in order to have a wider cross section of opinion on board, have consulted and sought suggestions from all the State Governments, including Government of Gujarat and concerned Central Ministries/Departments. The issues proposed by the State Governments have been considered by the Expert Group. The Group has since submitted its report and it has been considered by the Government of India in the Ministries of Home Affairs, Finance as well as by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). The proposal of revision of items and norms of assistance from CRF/NCCF is now being placed before the High Level Committee (HLC) for its consideration and approval. Thereafter, the revised items and norms, as approved by the HLC, will be notified and circulated to the States and the concerned Central Ministries/Departments/Organisations.

Clearance for fishing activities

805. SHRI V. HANUMANTHARAO: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that small firms face severe hardships due to delays in obtaining clearances for any crew or task force which has Chinese component;
- (b) how many weeks or months are required by Government to give routine visa clearance for crew required for fishing activities;
- (c) what steps are proposed to make efficient the grant of security clearance for fishing crews and ship crew if such people hold Chinese citizenship;
- (d) the exact number of applications pending for fishing crew clearance with Government; and
- (e) the date from which such applications are pending?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) There is no general ban on employment of foreigners, including crews in India. However, such foreigners need to qualify in terms of eligibility as laid down for grant of visa. Grant of visa to such foreigners is also made subject to security verification wherever put in place or appear appropriate and necessary.

- (b) Government conveys the clearance as expeditiously as possible, subject to security verification, wherever required.
- (c) The visa guidelines for Chinese nationals have recently been liberalized, while maintaining the necessity of security verification wherever in place.
- (d) and (e) In the year 2006, 19 cases for fishing crew clearance were received till 16.11.2006 from Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries and clearance in all cases have been sent.

Working group on autonomy for J&K

806. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Prime Minister promised recently to set up a working group to discuss greater federal autonomy for J&K; and